

Independent Living Advisory Committee (ILAC)

BlindSight of Delaware

2915 Newport Gap Pike

Wilmington, DE 19808

September 10, 2019

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

**Attendees:** Patti Addison, Vice Chair; Ken Roth, council member; Suzanne Howell, council member; Katherine Bottner, council member; Melodye May, Division for the Visually Impaired, and Debra Mills-Joe, Division for the Visually Impaired.

**Not in Attendance:** Wayne Marsh, Chairman; Carol King-Ries, member; Lynn Schneider, member; Blake Roberts, member, and August Hazuer, member.

**Call to Order:** Patti Addison called the meeting to order at 11:30 AM.

**Minutes of previous meeting:** Patti Addison made a motion to table the minutes of the last meeting due to the absence of several committee members. Kat Bottner seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Director's Report:**

Melodye May in Elisha Jenkins absence reported that the 2019 Division for the Visually Impaired Summer Skills Academy was held on July 8 - July 19<sup>th</sup> with the purpose of exposing participants to independent living skills, technology, orientation and mobility and career exploration.

In addition, DVI provided lessons aligned with the Expanded Core Curriculum including assistive technology, personal hygiene, clothing management, and gardening, tour of the Material Center and food preparation skills.

The Academy culminated with a graduation ceremony at the Route 9 Library in New Castle where recent graduates and Summer Academy students were awarded certificates of participation.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:**

During the Summer Skills academy, transition-aged students were exposed to career exploration opportunities at the Wilmington Blue Rocks, Christiana Hospital, and Ashland Nature Center.

New Partnerships during this reporting period were developed which include the YMCA Delaware, Planet Fitness, Rockland Place (retirement community), Exude (organizational Health), Hire Potential, Delaware Business Times, and Pulse Dream Cars.

For the second year, the Division for the Visually Impaired supported several high-school students that attended Level-Up: Connect, Engage, Act on the campus of Wichita State University. On June 23-28, 2019, participating students focused on enhancing skills that support transitioning to college or careers. Sessions and workshops included communication skills, building life, study and soft skills, how to develop leadership skills, STEAM and physical education, business etiquette, interviewing skills, and effective job search. In addition, students participated in a college and career fair and received a laptop to bridge the digital divide as they transition to education or employment.

During this reporting period DVI sponsored Mission Transition for blind and visually impaired students at Delaware State University. Students participating engaged in various skill-building activities and experienced college life. The Community Integrated System team provided workplace skill building and work-based learning experiences.

Twenty students participated in this year's weeklong Delaware Camp Abilities program on July 21. The focus was on all areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum with emphasis on goal setting, mindfulness, health and wellness. The focus was on athletics in addition.

#### **Orientation & Mobility:**

The Orientation and Mobility Unit continues to work with first responders on a statewide basis to set and schedule a date for sensitivity training class beginning in September.

#### **The Division's satisfaction survey rates from surveys for July are:**

Education	83%	satisfaction rate
Independent Living Services	84%	satisfaction rate
Orientation & Mobility	91%	satisfaction rate
Technology	95%	satisfaction rate
Vocational Rehabilitation	78%	satisfaction rate

The Division's Communication/Outreach staff are planning upcoming fall events, which include White Cane Day/Blind Americans Equality Day (October 15) and National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.

#### **Independent Living Services:**

On August 21, 2019, the Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Orientation and Mobility Programs provided sensitivity training to employees of Independent Resources, Inc. Center for Independent Living. Senior Administrator Melodye May provided an overview of the agency and discussed the courtesy rules of blindness with sighted guide. Samuel Larkin, Orientation and Mobility Instructor provided a lesson in sighted guide. At the conclusion of the training exercise, the executive director invited DVI employees to their next training on working with individuals who are deaf/blind. A recommendation was made for the ILS Unit to conduct workshops on personal safety tips and personal protection/self-defense.

Commented [D1]:

On August 26, 2019, State Independent Living Council held a meeting at BlindSight with the Delaware Department of Labor in which they announced that they would remain the designated state entity for the upcoming 2020-2023 State Plan for Independent Living cycle. As the state entity, DOL will continue to distribute the Independent Living grant from the Administration on Community Living to the state's Centers for Independent Living and DVI's Independent Living program.

#### **Statistics of ILS:**

Independent Living since October 1, 2018	served 88
Elderly since October 1, 2018	served 295

#### **BlindSight Delaware:**

BlindSight will be sending out the fall newsletter during the week of September 16, 2019. News of upcoming events and changes will be contained within. If anyone is interested in becoming a Peer Support Volunteer, please contact Patti Addison or Terry Marsh at (320) 998-5913.

#### **DABA:**

DABA has continued to support DVI with summer programs including a day of outdoor events. Lunch is provided for the one-day camp.

DABA is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a dinner being held at the Minqudale Fire Hall on October 4, 2019. Doors open at 5:00 PM and will end at 10:00 PM.

Deadline for reservations and money is October 1, 2019. Please join them for an evening of fun. For more information, contact Patti Addison at (302) 463-8700.

**IRI:**

Ken Roth would like to remind everyone of the upcoming Disability Ball on November 1, 2019. The cost is \$65.00 per person. Contact IRI for more information at (302) 765-0191.

**Old Business:** No old business to discuss.

**New Business:**

The Division for the Visually Impaired has relocated its Kent/Sussex office to expand geographic accessibility for the population it serves. Beginning August 26, 2019, the primary office serving Kent and Sussex Counties relocated to Georgetown on the grounds of the Stockley Center. In addition, DVI will have two Kent County satellite offices. One being located in Milford at the Milford State Service Center and the other in Smyrna at the Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill.

**Adjournment:**

Patti Addison made the motion to adjourn. Ken Roth seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Debra Mills-Joe  
Administrative Specialist I  
Division for the Visually Impaired